

Fluoroquinolones (FQN): A patient's guide to taking medicine for tuberculosis

What are fluoroquinolones?

Fluoroquinolones are a class of antibacterial drugs which can be used to treat TB. Types of fluoroquinolones are: ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin and moxifloxacin. There are two ways it can be used:

1. To cure TB disease (when taken with other medicines)
2. To treat inactive (latent) TB in some situations

The TB germs are very strong and are hard to get rid of. You will need to take this medicine for up to 12 months, and sometimes longer, in order to kill the TB bacteria and cure TB disease. Your doctor will decide exactly how many months you will take the medicine.

How do I take this medicine?

It is very important that you take the medicine every day or as instructed by your doctor. Tell your doctor right away if you stop taking your medicine. If you miss a dose take it as soon as possible, but never take two doses at one time. This medication can be taken on an empty stomach or with meals. However, avoid high intake of calcium-containing products, such as yogurt, milk, vitamins, or minerals containing iron, or antacids because these can decrease its effectiveness. Fluoroquinolones can be stored at room temperature. Remember to tell your doctor about other medicines you are taking or any new medicines that you start taking. If you are pregnant or breast-feeding talk to your doctor before taking this medicine

Some common side effects are:

- Upset stomach
- Sensitivity of skin to sunlight
- Mild diarrhea

If you have any of the following more serious side effects, stop taking the medicine and call your doctor:

- Pain, swelling or (rare) tearing of a tendon
- Rashes, hives, bruising or blistering, trouble breathing, or tightness in your chest
- Severe diarrhea
- Yellow skin or eyes (rare)
- Anxiety, confusion, or dizziness

Tips for taking your TB medicine

- Take your medicine at the same time every day, for example:
 - Before going to bed
 - First thing in the morning
- Use a weekly pill container
- Mark off each day on a calendar after you take your pills
- Ask a family member or friend to remind you